

## Martin Sampson House 1807

Martin Sampson and Sarah Freeman were married in November 1807 and went to live in a new house Martin had built not far from their families' homes. Both grew up along the old path that led from the Standish Graveyard to the mill and their new house lay a bit to the east of it, nearer the old Duxborough Path.

Martin's father was Elijah Samson, whose house is just off Depot St., and until this generation the name had been Samson, from Pilgrim times. Martin was first to add another letter, the modern spelling. Sarah was the daughter of Enoch Freeman, whose house was on the road from Kingston to Marshfield, as they described it then, and near the Bradford houses.

Martin built on a knoll or rise reached only by farm paths; no highway ran by the site. It was southerly facing, stretching out toward the old Partridge farm. The house is a finely proportioned Cape cottage, sturdy and well built around the traditional central chimney. Martin was a housewright, so many of the individual features are probably his own work and his own ideas. For example, the cornice in the parlor is elaborate for a Cape, with 3 distinct designs and the fireplace frame has the delicate reeding more usual in a Federal house.

Even in the second parlor or sitting room, there is reeding on the fireplace frame -- just enough different to fit a commonly used room, but surely a personal touch. Again that reeding is found on the stair rail -- fine long lines where is generally a smooth rail -- a grooving that is unusual if not unique. Surely Martin's work.

Only one chamber was originally finished, a low room under the eaves with a small fireplace. There was a second unfinished chamber and a long chamber, perhaps a work room, across the back of the house. In such a room might be stored a spinning wheel, wool, feathers and seeds.

Some time later an ell, a smaller older building, was added, the only noticeable change in many years. Sarah died in 1813, leaving 3 young children. She was in her new home only 6 years. Then 2 years later came another Sarah, who brought up the children along with a child of her own, a half brother to the 3 the first Sarah left.

Finally the Sampson house fell to the children, with unmarried Hannah living there alone for many years. When old age overtook her she went to live with her married sister, Sarah Sampson Coburn. After 1882, when Hannah died, the sister's family occupied the old house only in summer, which accounts for so few alterations and improvements.

The old furnishings were kept and the family took pride in maintaining the charm of their ancestral home. So authentic were the rooms that they attracted the attention of house decorators who several times featured the house in home magazines. It was called a typical Cape cottage, right down to the braided rugs and patchwork quilts. They made a great deal of the old fireplace and the brick oven, with a kettle on a trivet on the hearth.

Since the days of the Sampsons and Coburns, the necessary repairs and improvements have been made without losing the antique quality. An old building was moved on to the older ell, but the main Cape cottage is much as Martin Sampson designed and built it. It is now the home of John and Constance Doody.

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